

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-05 SS-15 PA-01 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 HA-05 /049 W

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R 071925Z MAR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8737

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 03894

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RPINS, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET CITIZEN APPROACHES EMBASSY OFFICER WITH
CLAIMED LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

1. ON MARCH 5 AN EMBASSY MOSCOW OFFICER ON A PRIVATE VISIT TO LENINGRAD WAS APPROACHED INSIDE ST. ISAAC'S CATHEDRAL BY A SOVIET CITIZEN WHO REQUESTED HELP IN GETTING A LETTER, PURPORTEDLY WRITTEN TO PRESIDENT CARTER, DELIVERED TO THE NEW YORK TIMES. THE SOVIET, WHO GAVE HIS NAME AS SHAIMER (PHON), BEGAN SPEAKING IN BROKEN ENGLISH THEN SWITCHED TO RUSSIAN WHEN HE LEARNED THAT THE EMBASSY OFFICER SPOKE RUSSIAN. SHAIMER CLAIMED TO HAVE SPOKEN EARLIER TO A GERMAN AND A BRITISH TOURIST WHO BOTH REFUSED TO HELP HIM. WHEN HE LEARNED THAT THE REPORTING OFFICER WORKED AT THE US EMBASSY IN MOSCOW, SHAIMER REPLIED "SO MUCH THE BETTER," AND REDOUBLED HIS EFFORTS TO CONVINCE THE EMBASSY OFFICER TO TAKE THE LETTER. SHAIMER REFUSED TO SHOW THE EMBASSY OFFICER A COPY OF THE LETTER IN THE CATHEDRAL. AFTER A FIVE MINUTE DISCUSSION CONDUCTED WHILE STROLLING AROUND THE INTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL, SHAIMER LEFT WHEN THE EMBASSY OFFICER REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE LETTER THERE.

2. SHAIMER CLAIMED TO REPRESENT A GROUP OF DISAFFECTED
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WORKERS IN THE YAROSLAVL' OBLAST'. IN RESPONSE TO THE EMBASSY OFFICER'S QUERY ABOUT WHY THE WORKERS HAD CHOSEN TO WRITE PRESIDENT CARTER, SHAIMER REPLIED HEATEDLY, "THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO DO. THEY BEAT YOU FOR THE SLIGHTEST THING." SHAIMER SAID HIS GROUP HAD FOLLOWED DEVELOPMENTS AT THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE, AND HE CLAIMED THAT HE HAD TRIED TO VISIT BELGRADE BUT THE SOVIET AUTHOR-

ITIES HAD DENIED HIM A VISA.

3. SHAIMER (IF THAT IS HIS REAL NAME) IS A SMALL, DARK MAN, WHO APPEARS TO BE IN HIS MID-FORTIES. HE WAS DRESSED IN AN ILL-FITTING SUIT AND INDEED GAVE THE APPEARANCE OF A WORKER DRESSED IN HIS "SUNDAY BEST." NEVERTHELESS, THE INCIDENT MAY HAVE BEEN A PROVOCATION. SHAIMER MADE HIS APPROACH WITHIN TWO MINUTES AFTER THE EMBASSY OFFICER, ACCOMPANIED BY HIS WIFE AND TWO FRIENDS ENTERED THE CATHEDRAL. HE BEGAN TALKING ABOUT THE LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER IMMEDIATELY, WITHOUT ANY ATTEMPTS TO "FEEL OUT" THE EMBASSY OFFICER'S RECEPTIVITY TO SUCH A PROPOSAL. THE EMBASSY OFFICER OBSERVED ANOTHER MAN WHO MAY HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE EMBASSY OFFICER AND SHAIMER DURING THEIR DISCUSSIONS IN THE CATHEDRAL. THE EMBASSY OFFICER, HOWEVER, WAS NOT FOLLOWED WHEN HE LEFT THE CATHEDRAL NOR, TO THE BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE, WAS HE FOLLOWED DURING THE REST OF HIS STAY IN LENINGRAD. TOON

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